CHAPTER 2

Life Span Physical Activity: A Revolution Not Limited by Age or Gender

Questions

- **What are major barriers to your ability to engage in regular physical activity?**
- **Are these new barriers, or have you always experienced them?**
- **Do you predict you will become more or less physically active as you get older?**

Objectives

- **Explore physical activity participation across the life span.**
  - **Gender**
  - **Race and ethnicity**
  - **Age**
- **Discuss barriers and incentives to increase physical activity across the life span.**

Physical Activity Recommendations (USDHHS, 2018)

- **Children and youths (0-17 years): Minimum of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA) per day**
- **Adults: Accumulate a minimum of 150 minutes of MVPA per week**
- **Combination of aerobic, muscular, and bone-strengthening activities**

The Early Years (Birth to Seven Years Old)

- **Engagement in play and physical activity is critical for the development of motor skills.**
  - **Typically, this is exploration of the environment (unstructured).**
  - **Modern life has increased time spent in preschools (structured).**
- **Activity and sport participation should be developmentally appropriate and recreational.**
  - **Organized competition should be reserved for children 11 to 12 years or older.**
- **Lack of access to opportunities can be a barrier to optimal motor skill development.**

Youth: The Transition Years (7 to 17 Years Old)

- **Overall sport participation appears to be increasing; economic disparities exist.**
- **During this stage, youth become either more active or more sedentary.**
- **School sports might be in decline; recreational or community participation is increasing.**
- **High school–aged youths tend to see the largest decline; children 6 to 12 might increase in participation.**

Young Adulthood (18 to 25 Years Old)

- **Colleges and universities have recreational or instructional physical activity opportunities.**
  - **Sport**
  - **Fitness**
  - **Lifestyle**
- **Workplace physical activity programs vary greatly.**
  - **Corporate wellness and internal health incentives**
  - **Individual requirements to find outside facilities or activities**
- **Disposable income has increased.**
  - **Fitness or fun?**
  - **Fitness or family?**

Older Adults (55 Years and Older)

- **Opportunity for recreational and competitive outlets is increasing.**
  - **Fitness classes**
  - **Masters Games**
- **Cycle of inactivity: As age increases, we tend to move less, which tends to create more pain and limitation, which tends to make us move less.**
- **Regular physical activity helps older people maintain length and quality of life.**

New Settings for Physical Activity

- **Fitness engagement at home has increased.**
  - **Equipment such as bikes and treadmills, online programs and classes, fitness apps, garage gyms**
  - **COVID-19 pandemic (2020) shifted where and how people had to engage in physical activity**
- **Fitness centers and sport clubs attract a range of members.**
- **Worksite fitness and wellness centers result in long-term cost savings in health costs.**
- **Increased need for trained health and fitness professionals.**

Emerging Characteristics of Lifetime Physical Activity

- **Facilitate an early start**
  - **Motor skill, fitness, behavioral development**
- **Reduce gaps in access and opportunity**
  - **Gender, race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status**
- **Engage older adults as the population ages**
  - **Maintain activity in those who are active.**
  - **Increase activity for those who are sedentary.**
- **Discuss strategies for how you would increase physical activity across the life span and close the gaps.**

The Role of the Private Sector

- **For-profit businesses or programs**
  - **Lack of public funding led to creation of new private industry**
- **Can increase the number and quality of programs and facilities**
  - **Can also increase the gap between wealthy and underserved populations**
- **Technology as a major trend**
  - **Wearable devices, apps, high-tech home equipment, virtual reality**
- **Demand for trained fitness professionals**
  - **Kinesiology and exercise science majors**

Issues, Barriers, and Solutions

- **Industrialization and modernization: Increase the amount of food available AND suppression of physical activity.**
- **Large inequities across race or ethnicities and geography.**
  - **Lack of healthy food options in underrepresented communities**
  - **High-cost physical activity programs**
  - **Urban versus rural communities**
- **Increased prevalence of technology for entertainment**
- **Communication and commitment between various agencies to promote equitable health and activity has increased.**

Activity

- **Discuss factors that create unequal access and opportunity to healthy food and physical activity. What are potential solutions?**
- **Describe how early childhood education, K-12 schools, and the private sector can work together to create lifelong physical activity participation.**
- **As a new fitness professional, what skills might you need to address the costs and benefits of using technology?**

Summary

- **Regular physical activity is recommended for all people.**
- **Early access to physical activity is necessary for optimal motor and behavioral development.**
- **Barriers exist to equal access to physical activity opportunities.**
- **Tasks/Assignments:**
- **Next Class:**